

Ham radio operators have way of getting around world

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Community Scene Editor

Ham radio operators aren't omnipresent, but they do have a way of getting around.

"The whole world is theirs," Jim Hinstorff, president of MANCORAD (Manitowoc County Radio Amateur Radio Club), said.

Jim was referring to the cross-country and international messages that are possible for the operators to send and receive.

Their around-the-world communication however, is a "cyclical thing." It "changes with sun spot activity," Jim explained.

Jim has had the hobby for a long time and he can recall reaching such distant shores as the coast of Africa, South America, an island off the Pacific and the Aleutians.

When only a high schooler he was in contact with a hospital in Nicaragua that was having a problem with a light on an operating table it had purchased in the U.S.

By running a "phone patch" he was able to connect it with Wisconsin General Hospital from which instructions on installation of the light were received.

"Ham radio is the king of hobbies."

Another time Jim talked to a man in Michigan who had lost his wallet. He asked him where he had last been, then through another phone patch, called the site and located the missing item.

There was also the time he spoke to a missionary in the Yucatan Peninsula, and through the phone patch arrangement, connected him with his family in Texas.

"There's a lot of personal satisfaction in being a ham radio operator," the club's president said. "You're not just passively sitting there and watching the 'tube' doing its thing. There's a whole pile more of adventure in being a ham radio operator."

Jim says ham radio is the "pioneer of radio and TV."

MANCORAD has reached maturity, too. The local organization is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. Meetings take place at 8 p.m. the third Wednesday of the month at the Manitowoc Red Cross Building.

Members gather to keep abreast of changes in Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations and to receive an update on the latest equipment and operating techniques.

There are also films on radio communications and guest speakers with such topics as emergency situations and severe weather. The group also has one of its meetings at the Civil Defense Command Center at Manitowoc.

Actually, "the bent of MANCORAD is disaster communications," Jim pointed out.

Affiliated with the American Red Cross and "tied through direct radio communication" with it, as well as with Civil Defense and the Search and Rescue Team, MANCORAD "becomes the arms, legs and eyes of civil authorities in emergency situations," the organization's president said.

Club members are issued Red Cross cards that "get them into the disaster scene."

"There are no restrictions for becoming a ham radio operator."

The Emergency Corps section of the club is routinely involved in "SET" — simulated emergency tests which are part of national exercises.

SET "scenarios" are drawn up on a city or county-wide basis, and in a recent mock disaster concerning Cleveland, the club worked with Red Cross personnel at Sheboygan as well.

The organization also sets up stations, working hand-in-hand with other groups, during mock disasters sponsored by Two Rivers Community Hospital.

During "emergencies," members use a "repeater station" through which they can communicate at greater distances and can also make phone calls.

The repeaters, Jim said, have their own emergency generator and "flexibility is their bonus." They make it possible to talk at a distance of 50 miles with a hand-held radio, he pointed out.

During a disaster, mock or real, the Emergency Corps "attaches itself to key emergency personnel," the ham radio operator said. After each mock run-through, the club has a critique and later all groups involved gather for a "post-mortem."

Jim refers to ham radio as the "king of hobbies."

With CB, he says, "you just have to be alive and technically 18 to get a license. CB, he said, differs because it was intended for "small businesses and to dispatch trucks, etc." Ham radio, he says, provides a "public service and the states realize this."

The club conducts special courses to enable persons to pass the FCC examination for



Staff Photo-Lou Fandrick

CLUB WITH CAUSE — Jim Hinstorff, Manitowoc, center, president of MANCORAD (Manitowoc County Amateur Radio Club); John Glaeser, Manitowoc, left, operations manager; and Stan Kowalski, Two Rivers, right, secretary-treasurer, operate equip-

ment at the club's meeting site at the Red Cross building, Manitowoc. Through its American Red Cross and Civil Defense affiliation, the club becomes the "arms, legs and eyes of civil authorities in emergency situations."

the first step in ham radio — the "novice-class license."

An FCC ham license is required for full-membership in MANCORD. Associated members are those interested in the medium as a hobby or those working toward a license.

A novice, Jim explained, "can only communicate by radio-telegraph."

According to international regulations, the applicant must demonstrate his basic ability with the Morse Code and operate at five words per minute. He must also know basic operating rules and basic electronic theory.

"There are other steps or classes in licensing which are an incentive to improve," Jim pointed out.

The second level, or "technician's class," requires the same code test as the novice, but more advanced theory and rules. These operators have novice privileges, plus limited use of other frequencies with voice, Jim said.

The "general class" involves the same theory test as the technician's and the operator must be adept at 13 wmp with the Morse Code. The "general" carries all but a few amateur privileges, the club president explained.

In the "advanced" class, the same code requirement prevails as in the general. The most advanced theory and exam are required and the class conveys the privilege of more frequencies.

The "ultra" in the levels is the "amateur-extra" attained by taking "an extremely difficult" test and being able to tap out an 18 wmp code, Jim said. This class carries all amateur privileges he said.

Advantages of ham radio over CB, Jim said, are the "legal use of up to 1,000 watts of

power and literally millions of channels in addition to being able to communicate around the world and through satellites circling in space."

People of any age are welcome to join MANCORAD.

"There are no age restrictions for becoming a ham radio operator," Jim said. "No one's ever too old, either," he said, adding that there are "hams" in every walk of life.

"Even if a person is sick he can be a ham. If he's able and well he can get involved in other things with it. There are so many sub-hobbies and special interest lines ... maybe 50 of them."

Some, he said, make a hobby

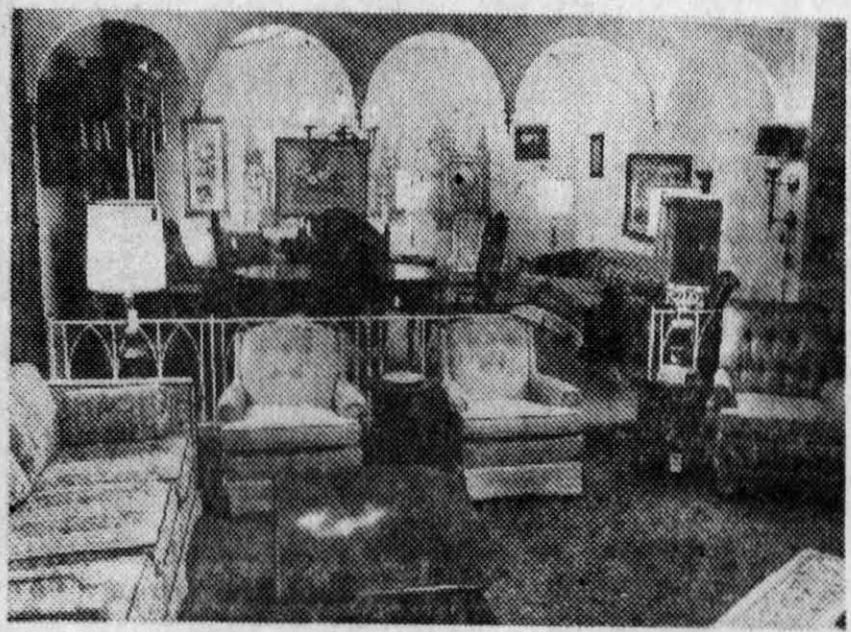
of counting the number of states and countries they have reached. Others are interested in foreign relations.

"There are communication experiments and lots of technical frontiers that still can open up," Jim said.

All that's necessary to be a ham radio operator, according to Jim, is the "interest and gumption to learn and a modest amount of money to put together a station."

Potential members of MANCORAD may contact Jim at Manitowoc. For those interested, the group will have its next meeting Wednesday on the Submarine Cobia where a tour of the radio room will be given.

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Farmland prices called unrealistic

EAU CLAIRE, Wis. (AP) — "Farmland now costs more than can realistically be repaid through its use," bankers attending an agricultural credit conference were advised Wednesday.

Leslie W. Peterson, chairman of the agricultural bankers division of the American Bankers Association said land often costs so much that its produce cannot pay for it.

"Farmland prices are unrealistic. That should be a warning to you," he told the lenders.

Gary Rohde, state agriculture secretary, said Wisconsin farmland averaged \$615 an acre last year and that many farmers were willing to buy all they could at that price.

The price is considerably higher in some other states, he said.

The 200 bankers at the conference adopted a resolution calling for speedier financial assistance to farmers whose production is interrupted by flood, drought and other natural fates.

The resolution proposes that municipalities rather than counties be the units for identifying areas eligible for federal disaster aid.